

January 27, 2006

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
BUREAU OF HIGHWAY DESIGN**

**CONFERENCE REPORT**

**PROJECT:** ALSTEAD  
14540M  
(NH 123 and NH 123A repairs and reconstruction)

**DATE OF CONFERENCE:** January 24, 2006

**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE:** Alstead Town Offices

**ATTENDED BY:** DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
R. Landry      J. Evans      D. Graham      C. Forest  
M. Dugas

Town of Alstead

Matthew Saxton, Selectmen Chairman      Linda Christie ,  
Administrative Assistant  
Joel McCarty, Selectman      Kim Kercewich, Fire Chief  
William Moran, Selectman      David Crosby, Director of Public  
Works  
Bruce Bellows, Alstead Historical Society

**SUBJECT:** Status of NH 123 and NH 123A reconstruction

R. Landry explained that with the recent completion of the emergency repairs to NH 123 and NH 123A, this meeting serves as the transfer of primary responsibility from the Department's Bureau of Construction and Craig Forest to the Bureau of Highway Design. The Department's attention will now be directed toward making more permanent improvements to the roadway. He noted that aerial survey was undertaken during the first week of November 2005; as a result, much of the existing roadway indicated on the plans is actually the gravel haul road that was constructed immediately after the October flooding. Ground survey was collected in those areas where a higher level of detail was needed or in those areas where the aerial survey was obscured. The Department's current effort is to lay out the existing right of way and property lines on the survey plans. He noted (and the Selectmen acknowledged) that the inaccuracies of the Town's tax maps will make this task challenging.

R. Landry explained that the Department's initial thoughts were that design efforts would be directed to three priority areas:

1. Replacement of the temporary bridge with a permanent structure at the bottom of Hatch Hill: R. Landry noted that the construction could be expedited and property impacts minimized if NH 123 could be closed during construction, thereby allowing the road to remain in its existing location. The closure would be for a maximum of four weeks. The Selectmen supported closing the road during non-school times due to the safety concern of diverting school buses to Camp Brook Road.
2. Widening of the one-lane segment of NH 123 to two lanes between NH 123A and NH 12A.
3. Improvements to the NH 123 / Cobb Hill Road intersection: M. Dugas explained that the alignment and profile of the current NH 123 detour provide for a design speed of only 20 to 25 miles per hour. The permanent improvement to this section of the road, whether it is along the existing detour alignment or elsewhere, should provide for a design speed of 30 or 35 mph and correct the pre-existing sight distance deficiencies. M. Saxton pointed out that the Selectmen do not support reconnecting Cooper Hill Road to NH 123 due to the significant cost to the Town. He also mentioned that the Selectmen want to minimize any straightening of NH 123 to prevent increasing speeds.

R. Landry mentioned that a historic investigation would be required to determine the historicity of the Wildes property. He noted also that the Department had offered to undertake historic evaluations of all the properties whose owners have requested acquisition under the Town of Alstead buyout program.

He explained further that, in addition to the priority study areas noted above, the Department expects that much of the roadway that was constructed following the flooding would need to be either reconstructed or rehabilitated in the near future. The emergency repairs were undertaken with speed of opening the roadway as the primary concern, and, as a result, didn't necessarily comply with Department standards for road construction, such as those pertaining to the depth, quality, and compaction of roadway base materials. The Department anticipates that the recently reconstructed segments of the road may be in distress after the winter and spring. The rebuilding would also address reinstalling underdrain, formalizing the end treatments of culverts, providing adequate drainage ditches, stabilizing steep slopes, and replacing concrete barriers with guardrail (or flattening slopes to eliminate the need for guardrail). The existing paved width of the road is approximately 24'. The Department recommends that the reconstruction provide 11' lanes with 4' shoulders (30' total width), in part to improve the safety of snow removal. The

width could be narrowed where needed to minimize adverse impacts. Prior to the flood, NH 123 from NH 12A to NH 123A had a roadway typical of 12' lanes with 4' shoulders (32' total width). The Selectman supported this concept.

W. Moran asked if sidewalks could be constructed as part of these improvements. They could extend from the school to the library along NH 123, from NH 123 to Vilas Pool along NH 123A, and from the library across the rigid frame bridge in town (currently there are sidewalks on the rigid frame bridge). R. Landry responded that if the Town had a master plan for sidewalks in the area of the flood damage the Department would investigate whether sidewalks could be built without substantial right of way impacts. The project is not intended to extend into town much beyond the intersection with NH 123A. R. Landry also indicated that the 4-foot shoulders do provide an area for bicyclists and pedestrians to use along NH 123 and NH 123A without a formal sidewalk.

Chief Kercewich noted that the locations with the most crashes prior to the flood within the project area include the foot of Hatch Hill (vicinity of the temporary bridge), the sharp curve near the horse farm, and the vicinity of Cobb Hill Road. M. Saxton recommended that, due to the possibly permanent closure of Cooper Hill Road and the diversion of its traffic to NH 12A, the severe skew of the NH 123 / NH 12A be improved.

D. Crosby reported that the culverts that had been installed to replace those lost in the flooding performed very well during recent heavy rains. He also noted, regarding the uncertainty of determining the location of the former road in those areas that were washed away by the flooding, that the new road in the vicinity of Crosby Lane was reconstructed in virtually the same location as the former road.

J. McCarty explained that the owner of the former gas station at the NH 123 / NH 123A intersection wants to rebuild his business in its former location. He noted that the prior non-conforming use would be grandfathered if it could be reconstructed within two years of its loss. The owner, however, cannot proceed with his redevelopment until FEMA (who has subcontracted with the US Geological Survey) can determine the base flood elevation for this area. R. Landry noted that the Department has subcontracted with USGS to perform a hydrologic study of the valley, the results of which should be available in February. If the study finds that the waterway opening of the NH 123A bridge is inadequate for the appropriate design storm, the bridge may need to be replaced with a larger structure. The bridge replacement would likely also require enlargement of the stream channel approaching the bridge. J. Evans added that the property owner would need to coordinate with the Department of Environmental Services to resolve the complicated wetland issues.

R. Landry proposed that a public informational meeting be held in about six weeks to which all the NH 123 and NH 123A abutters would be invited. The Department will prepare design alternatives for the priority areas noted earlier. The Selectmen agreed and suggested that the meeting be held at the Vilas Middle School. R. Landry noted that the schedule for the NH 123 and NH 123A construction would depend largely on the amount of property acquisition required. Ideally, work on the priority areas could begin late summer of this year, while the design and right of way involvement of the overall reconstruction could delay that work for a year or more. J. McCarty explained that the Town has received requests for acquisition from 36 property owners. He offered the Department the use of any of these properties, if the Town ultimately purchases them, as staging areas for the construction.

Submitted by:

Michael J. Dugas, P.E.  
Preliminary Design Supervisor

NOTED BY: R. Landry

cc: M. Saxton – Town of Alstead (please distribute to Town attendees)  
W. Cass, W. Hauser, D. Graham, C. Forest, W. Oldenburg

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